



## PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING SPORT PLAYERS' PERFORMANCE IN CHINA

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### **Abstract:**

Previous studies revealed that the factors that deal with the cognition of the athletes are the psychological factors, however, most essential psychological factors that lead to performance, and most of the findings are based on the relationship between one or very limited factors that are affecting athlete performance rather than considering a considerable number of psychological factors. Specifically, little attention has been given to the research aspect of sports in China, even though a large number of research are done in Western countries. The current study explores the relationship between emotion, spirituality, self-talk, self-efficacy, goal-orientation, intrinsic motivation, and sport players' performance. A total of 308 respondents were used for data analysis through SPSS and structural equation modeling which showed that spirituality, goal-orientation, and self-talk positively influence performance and emotion negatively influences performance. Self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation non-significantly influence performance. Lastly, theoretical, and practical implications as well as limitations were discussed accordingly.

**Keywords:** emotion, spirituality, self-efficacy, goal-orientation, self-talk, intrinsic motivation, sport players' performance

### **1. Introduction**

Sport has the ability to change the lives of individuals (UNOSDP, 2003) because sport is considered a human right (UN, 1979) and concurs with civic values and political interventions, where it is to outline the standards and integrities accredited not only to athletes, but the whole culture (Macri, 2012). According to Pink (2008), The term sport is defined as *"an activity involving physical exertion, skill and/or hand-eye coordination as the*

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*primary focus of the activity, with elements of competition where rules and patterns of behaviour governing the activity exist formally through organizations".* The importance of sports has been described by scholars in different arenas. Participation in sports renders numerous benefits for individuals. Such positive outcomes are improvements in physical health (weight control, strength enhancement, and building, improved flexibility, boosted coordination and motor skills, better cardiac health) and influence on psychological and emotional healing and well-being (reduction of stress and aggression, alleviate depression or anxiety, enhanced self-confidence and improved self-image, improves concentration and mental functioning) of the participant in sports (CESSI, 2005; Eime, et al., 2013). Besides, sport also plays a substantial role in healthy social development and collaboration (CESSI, 2005), harness a variety of benefits for individuals, families, communities, and society at large, as well as increasing the advancement of participants' physical literacy, well-being, health, and skills.

Sport is a universal language and therefore can be used as a tool for promoting peace, symbolically on the global level and practically within communities (Kaida, et al., 2014). Therefore, there arises a necessity to study the factors affecting team player performance with special emphasis on a national level. Performance in team sports requires countless types of skills and will be highly reliant on a combination of players' somatic (physical), strategic (tactical), technical, and socio-psychological capabilities (Stølen, et al., 2005; Mateusz, et al., 2014). Furthermore, some of the factors that are affecting performance are controllable by the athlete, and some are uncontrollable by the athletes (De Bossche, et al., 2006). In particular, Controllability refers to an individual's perception of an outcome being within one's own control or outside of one's control (Forrester, 2013; Che et al., 2022). Such as tactics, abilities, movement on and off the ball or the item used, skills, and the behavior in the warm-up (Turner, 2015; Turner & Barker, 2014; Wang et al., 2022b). In contrast, competition, legislations, government controls, weather, cultural forces, age, gender, and many more are uncontrollable elements in any context (Gauri & Cateora, 2009; Turner, 2015; Wang et al., 2020) and the sports-specific uncontrollable elements of athlete performance are the crowd, the referee, the opposition, the venue, and the court/pitch surface (Turner, 2015).

Previous studies revealed that the factors that deal with the cognition of the athletes are the psychological factors, and these are the factors that entail with the behavior of the athletes. Researchers have found that psychological factors are the key facilitating factors in developing skills but yet minimum emphasis has been placed on such factors by the researchers (Abbott & Collins, 2002; Habibian, et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2022a). The interviews conducted with Olympic participants by Greenleaf et al. (2001) concluded the importance of psycho-social factors on a higher level of performance, for example, the psychological factors as athlete self-confidence, and positive attitude, and social factors such as social support, coach inter-personal trust and team unity (Greenleaf, et al., 2001; Jowett & Felton, 2013; Li et al., 2021). Nevertheless, most essential psychological factors that lead to performance and most of the findings are based on the relationship between one or very limited factors that are affecting athlete performance rather than considering a considerable number of psychological factors (Blanchard, et al.,

2009; Song, 2022). Furthermore, little attention has been given on research aspect of sports in China, even though a large number of research are done in Western countries. The relationship of psychological factors and team performance remain statistically untested in the sports sector within China (Perera & Pushpakumari, 2016). Therefore, the current study explores the influence of emotion, spirituality, self-efficacy, goal-orientation, self-talk, and intrinsic motivation on sport players' performance.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Emotion**

Emotion refers to a state characterized by physiological arousal, subjective feelings, changes in facial expression, and adoptive behaviours (Coon & Mitterer, 2016; Coon, 1998). Generally, there are positive and negative emotions that affect the behavior of a person. There are a range of emotions which has been witnessed in sport, comprising anxiety, frustration, disappointment, happiness, hope, and anger (Woodman, et al., 2009). Previous research in sport psychology has concentrated broadly on measuring emotions with the intention of describe them and divulge their antecedents and significances (Latinjak & Girona, 2012). Affect is a common term that covers a wide range of feelings that individuals experience and is considered as an umbrella concept which includes wide range of feelings (George, 1995), including emotions and moods. Consequently, moods are feelings which are considered as less intense when compared with emotions (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

Positive and negative affect scale identifies both negative and positive emotions which lead to optimal and dysfunctional performance (Hanin, 2000). According to the affective event theory, the linkages between employees' internal influences such as cognition, emotion state and their reactions to incidents that occur in their work environment that affect their performance, organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). The positive-inducing (e.g., uplifts) as well as negative-inducing (e.g., hassles) emotional incidents at work are distinguishable and have a significant psychological impact upon workers' job satisfaction. This results in lasting internal (e.g., cognition, emotions, mental states) and external affective reactions exhibited through job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Positive emotions include pleasant or desirable situational responses, ranging from interest and contentment to love and joy, but are distinct from pleasurable sensation and undifferentiated positive affect. These emotions are markers of people's overall well-being or happiness, but they also enhance future growth and success. This has been demonstrated in work, school, relationships, mental and physical health, and longevity. In contrast, negative emotion is usually an unpleasant or unhappy emotion which is evoked in individuals to express a negative affect towards an event or person (psychologydictionary.org). Many scholars consider anger, stress and anxiety as the prominent negative emotions (Cerin, 2003; Cerin, et al., 2000) and dejection is also considered as another important affective state (Jones, et al., 2005). Many studies have shown that how emotion influences one's performance, such as Gezesofloo et al. (2013)

found that anger and self-confidence remarkably effect on rate of success, Sincero (2012) indicated that the range of stress levels that a person can completely manage which enables good performance stages. Parnabas et al. (2013) identified the relationship between cognitive and somatic anxiety on performance and found a negative correlation between anxiety (cognitive and somatic) and performance. In contrast, Lazarus (2000) demonstrated that happiness indicating that a person has appraised him/herself as making progress toward a goal whereas Burton et al. (2006) stated that excitement is typically considered to be a positive emotion that is associated with arousal and activation of the autonomic nervous system. Therefore, this study considers emotion as a multidimension concept which include anger, stress, anxiety, happiness, and excitement, and the following hypothesis is proposed for testing:

**H1:** Emotion has a significant impact on performance.

## 2.2 Spirituality

Spirituality is defined from a religious standpoint, where *“personal meaning is derived from whatever people deem to be ultimate and valued in and of itself”* (Helminiak, 1996). There are arguments that the researchers failed to apprehend the spiritual dimension of sport (Watson & Nesti, 2005). Watson & Nesti (2005) stated that sports have an extensive history of spiritual connections, and currently, many proficiencies of athletes are not simply described by natural science. The foremost model of spiritual leadership was constructed within an intrinsic motivation framework that assimilated spiritual leadership (i.e., vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love) and well-being (Fry, 2003). Eventually, it should foster higher levels of important outcomes (including individual and organizational) such as organizational commitment and productivity, financial performance, employee life satisfaction, and corporate social responsibility (Fry, et al., 2010; Fry & Nisiewicz, 2012). Spirituality at work has three core modules: inner life, meaningful work and community. Inner life is referred to as an understanding of a celestial power and exactly how to utilize it to live a complete outer life. Additionally, it is said that that meaningful work arises when workforces identify that their work effort gives importance or has a determination for their lives. Furthermore, community denotes to how individuals feel connected to one another at the organizational setting.

Recent sports researchers have focused on spirituality in the domains of sports exercise psychology and counseling. For example, Watson and Mark (2005) in their research suggest that the concept of spirituality should be considered seriously within sport psychology research and consultancy. Czech and Bullet (2007) in their research on intercollegiate Christian athletes' perceptions of prayer so that coaches can understand the thought processes of religious athletes revealed that prayer intensity, prayer meaning, and the number of times praying increased with the importance of performance. Furthermore, a number of studies (Czech & Burke, 2007; Dillon & Tait, 2000; Vernacchia, et al., 2000) and theoretical work (Ravizza, 2002a) has identified the important role that spirituality can play in enhancing sport performance and contributing to personal growth and well-being. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H2:** Spirituality has a significant impact on performance.

### 2.3 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as “*people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives*” (Bandura, 1994). Self-efficacy philosophies determine how people think, feel, motivate themselves and behave. Further these facts create varied effects through four main processes namely, cognitive, motivational, and affective and selection processes (Bandura, 1994). According to Bandura (1994), there are four main sources which influence on development of efficacy which are mastery experience, vicarious experience, vicarious experience, and physiological and affective states. The most reliable sources of efficacy evidence are the records on success or higher performance (Schunk & Usher, 2012). According to Bandura (1994), successive events improve confidence, and every failure deteriorates it. Nevertheless, the determination to face the failures and setbacks are facilitated by the self-efficacy credence built on previous accomplishments (Hendricks, 2015). Social comparisons and norm-referencing facilitates lead people to compare their capabilities and abilities with regard to the others (Hendricks, 2015). Witnessing and observing the performance of the others provide individuals to enhance their confidence with regard to ability to perform related tasks (Bandura, 1994). Vicarious experience is highly effective once individuals identify a similar relationship amongst their skills and the skills of the benchmark model (Bandura, 1994; Hendricks, 2015).

Moreover, Verbal persuasion is frequently used by teachers simply because of the convenience (Bandura, 1977a). Realistic self-assertion and assertion from others can expedite efficacy perceptions. However, verbal persuasions not powerful or effective in the case of, provision of compliments without substantiation. Research have demonstrated limitation of verbal persuasion and specify that it would not bring advantages to all domains (Bandura, 1994; Bandura, 1997). In addition, perception of abilities of an individual is influenced by his awareness of the physical and emotional reactions of the body to certain situations (Bandura, 1997). Obtaining the capabilities to curtail negative thoughts and preserve a positive attitude when facing problematic or exciting tasks aid individuals attain a level of self-efficacy and reduce their undesirable emotional arousal on top of social relations (Bandura, 1994; Bandura, 1997). Certain studies showed that how self-efficacy influence one’s performance, such as Su et al. (2016) found that self-efficacy and mission performance have a positive correlation. Similar results have been found from the studies conducted in sports context (Feltz, et al. 2008; Lai & Chen 2012). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H3:** Self-efficacy has a significant impact on performance.

### 2.4 Goal-orientation

Goal orientation is a “*disposition toward developing or demonstrating ability in achievement situations*” (VandeWalle, 1997). Goal setting helps individuals to reach their desired performance. Range of goals kept by athletes may stimulate them to constantly participate in training and reach higher performance during competition. Based on Nicholls’s theoretical explanations, Duda (1992) proposed the formation of two principal achievement goal perceptions, namely task orientation and ego orientation, focus on how

athletes appraise their level of effort, ability, and judgment of performance. The two concepts are distinguished based on achievement behavior which is delineated as “*that behavior in which the goal is to develop or demonstrate to self or to others high ability, or to avoid demonstrating low ability*”: 1) ability assessment of an individual in task orientation is self-referenced, and not include a state of social evaluation where there would be an interest in self-development and learning, and their emphasis is maximize the effort to the task which leads to mastery with little or no emphasis for the success or outcome (Roberts, 2007; Duda, 1992); and 2) an ego-oriented athlete demonstrates a normative commencement of ability where his main concern would be the social comparison. The major concern of an ego-oriented athlete is, “winning” (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2003).

Previous studies showed that the relationship between goal orientation and performance is mix. For instance, Ames (1992), Ames & Archer (1988), and Valle et al. (2003) found that goal orientation determines students’ cognitive and behavioral reactions as well as their educational performance. However, Van-Yperen & Duda (1999) found that there are no significant associations between goal orientations beliefs and self-appraisals of performance improvement when performance is measured by athlete. In addition, Kleingeld & Mierlo (2011) found that specific goals tend to lead to more success in performance. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H4:** Goal-orientation has a significant impact on performance.

## 2.5 Self-talk

The most important theory cited in literature relating to self- talk is self-efficacy theory developed by Bandura (1977a). Self-efficacy is defined as “*beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments*” (Bandura, 1977a). Bandura (1977a) suggested the sources for efficacious beliefs namely, mastery (previous performance accomplishments), vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and interpretation of affective states and physiological. Self-talk is considered as the third source of efficacy information. Verbal theory of self-regulation suggests that human develop cognitively to use language as an apparatus/ (tool) of thought (Vygotsky, 1978). In his theory, Vygotsky distinguishes between social speech and private speech (overt self-talk). Overt, private speech or external self-talk is described in a manner that permits another individual to hear what was said. In contrast, covert, inner speech, or internal self-talk is basically using an insignificant voice inside one’s head, which cannot be overheard by another person (Van Raalte et al., 1994). Vygotsky suggests that overt and covert self-talk are related to each other and are both speech for the self. Past studies showed that self-talk significantly influence one’s performance, for example, Hatzigeorgiadis (2014) found that Self-talk interventions are proven as effective for enhancing sport task performance and Van Raalte et al. (1995) found that Positive self-talk group beat/outperformed those in the negative and neutral self-talk groups. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H5:** Self-talk has a significant impact on performance.

## 2.6 Intrinsic motivation

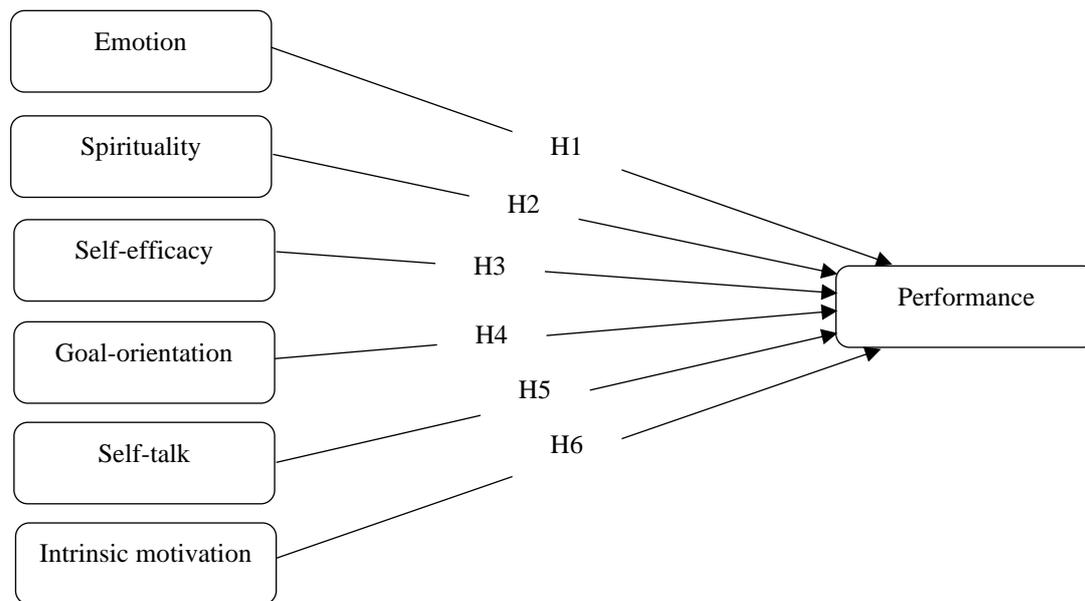
The conception of motivation was developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Cucui & Cucui, 2014). Before that “money” was considered most valuable input to the production process to develop products however, after the “Hawthorne Studies at American Western Electric Company in Chicago”, conducted by Elton Mayo (1924-1932) it was found that employees do not only motivated by money but that their behavior was interrelated to their attitudes (Dickson, 1973; Lindner, 1998). Subsequently, there arises a necessity to study the behavior of people as well as the reasons behind such behavior. Self-determination theory delineates the sources of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in relation to cognitive behavior of individuals and individual differences (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Additionally, the initial theory further identifies that individual’s inherent growth tendencies and distinctive psychological needs are the basis for self-motivation which fosters positive practices of individuals (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Based on empirical studies on intrinsic motivation and internalization, it is found that there are set of psychological needs which are universal and must be satisfied for effective functioning of individuals and their psychological health and which is essential for human thriving (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Chen, et al., 2015). The self-determination theory identifies three universal innate psychological needs namely, autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Consistent with self-determination theory, individuals experience intrinsic motivation once their innate and fundamental needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Accordingly, Autonomy refers to the degree to which individuals feel volitional and accountable for the commencement of their behavior (Bartholomew et al., 2010) where they perform their activities willingly without any force from other parties. The term autonomy is defined by Ryan et al. (1995) as the self-rule or actions that are initiated and delimited by the self, and apparently refers to a person’s need for liberty and the belief that they are in control of their activities. The need for competence reflects the degree to which individuals feel able to accomplish their goals and anticipated outcomes and experience openings in which to express their competences (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Competence further refers to “*a need to feel effective in dealing with and mastering one’s environment*” (Markland & Vansteenkiste, 2008). The need for relatedness is defined as the degree to which individuals feel a secure sense of belongingness and connectedness to others in their social setting (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Additionally, it is referred to as “*a concern about connections with others and the quality of our interpersonal relationships*”.

Intrinsic motivation is grounded on the proposition that human beings have an inborn/innate (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Motivation is assumed to be intrinsic when performance and the behavior are driven by joy or interest in the job itself, in order to feel challenged and to discover new things (Deci, 1975). A person feels satisfied, enjoyed, and considers the task to be fun, when he is intrinsically motivated (Csikszentmihalyi, 1978). Intrinsic motivation is inculcated with internal locus of causality as initiating from within them instead of external controls or burdens (deCharms, 1968). In contrast, when a person is extrinsically motivated, he/she engages in a task, simply to derive rewards which are external to the task itself (Vallerand, 2001). According to the publication made by Deci

and Ryan in 1985 titled *"intrinsic motivation and self-determination in Human behavior"* specifies different types of extrinsic motivation depending on the inherent levels of self-determination of individuals. The four such types from lowest to highest are, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and integrated regulation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The current study only adopts intrinsic motivation as a dimension of motivation due to most of previous studies related to intrinsic motivation have shown consistent predictive power than extrinsic motivation. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H6:** Intrinsic motivation has a significant impact on performance.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework

### 3. Research methodology

#### 3.1 Samples

Probability sampling states the design in which the elements of the population have some known chance or probability of being selected as sample subjects (Sekaran & Bougie, 2012). The target population of the present study is the national team players who are representing China under the national flag. Practically, the sample will be drawn from a list of population elements that often differs somewhat from the defined target population (Zikmund, et al., 2013). A list of elements from which the sample may be drawn is called a sample frame. The sample frame of the current study is the team players nominated by the national sports federations to the Ministry of sports China. The rule of thumb of sampling provided by Roscoe (1975) pointed out that a sample of more than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research and when samples are broken into subsamples, a minimum of sample size of 30 for each category is needed. Overall, a sample of 308 valid respondents were recruited for data analysis.

### 3.2 Operationalization

Questions were derived for the variables from the standard questionnaires which had been validated in different contexts. the questionnaire comprised of four sections where the first section covers the demographic profile of the elite athletes where the other three sections contain the items representing the constructs of the conceptual framework. Twenty-two items belonging to emotion were adopted from Jones et al. (2005) and Cohen et al. (1983), six items belonging to intrinsic motivation were adopted from Weinberg et al. (2000), eight items belonging to goal-orientation were adopted from Duda (1992), five items belonging to self-efficacy were adopted from Chen et al. (2001), McKinney (2003), and Chen et al. (2001). Furthermore, eight items belonging to self-talk were adopted from Zervas et al. (2007) and five items belonging to spirituality were adopted from Dillon & Tiat (2000). In addition, a five-point Likert scale as measurement scale was used for this study.

## 4. Data analysis and results

### 4.1 Demographic characteristics

Among 308 respondents, most of them were from urban region (35.4%) and 58.1% were male. Majority of the respondents reported that they earned between 25,000 and 50,000 Chinese yuan, and most of them were single status (70.1%). Furthermore, the average age of the respondents was 25.2 years and most of them had more than 10 years' experience in football (See Table 1).

**Table 1:** Demographic characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	179	58.1%
Female	129	41.9%
<b>Hometown</b>		
Urban	109	35.4%
Suburb	93	30.2%
Rural	106	34.4%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	216	70.1%
Married	90	29.2%
Widow/widower	2	0.6%
<b>Monthly Income</b>		
Unemployed	16	5.2%
Below ¥25,000	39	12.7%
¥25,001 – 50,000	211	68.5%
¥50,001 – 100,000	38	12.3%
Above ¥100,000	4	1.3%
<b>Education Level</b>		
Below Primary	17	5.5%
Primary	112	36.4%
Secondary	135	43.8%

Diploma	18	5.8%
Degree	25	8.1%
Masters/PhD	1	0.3%
<b>Your Involved Sport</b>		
Basketball	26	8.4%
Badminton	13	4.2%
Qigong	18	5.8%
Football	60	19.5%
Hockey	40	13%
Table Tennis	42	13.6%
Netball	20	6.5%
Dragon Boat Racing	28	9.1%
Volleyball	43	14.0%
Throw ball	18	5.8%
<b>Experience in the Relevant Event</b>		
Less than 5 years	57	18.5%
5-10 Years	109	35.4%
More than 10 years	142	46.1%
<b>Age (average, S.D.)</b>	25.2 ± 4.3	

#### 4.2 Confirmatory factor analysis

Cronbach's Alpha was estimated for the constructs namely, emotion, spirituality, self-efficacy, self-talk, goal-orientation, intrinsic motivation, and performance to assess the level of reliability. Confirmatory factor analysis is used to validate the factor configuration of a set of observed variables. After dropped off factor loadings below 0.5, rest of items' standard factor loadings exceeded 0.6. In order to achieve convergent validity, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were checked (See Table 2). Discriminant validity is established when two variables are theorized to be uncorrelated, and the scores obtained by measuring them are indeed empirically found to be so (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The model fit of indices showed that Chi-square = 2793.498,  $df = 1766$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , CMIN = 1.582, CFI = 0.928, TLI = 0.915, RMSEA = 0.042.

**Table 2:** Convergent validity

Construct (Cronbach's Alpha)	Item	Factor loadings	CR	AVE
Emotion ( $\alpha = 0.818$ ) (anger)	During the competition I felt ...	.741	.967	.865
	1. annoyed	.761		
	2. irritated	.811		
	3. furious	.699		
Emotion (excitement)	During the competition I felt ...	.749		
	1. enthusiastic	.758		
	2. excited	.687		
	3. energetic			
Emotion (happiness)	During the competition I felt ...	.835		
	1. joyful	.891		

	2. pleased 3. cheerful 4. happy	.813 .776		
Emotion (anxiety)	During the competition I felt ... 1. nervous 2. anxious 3. tense 4. apprehensive 5. uneasy (delete)	.753 .752 .694 .698		
Emotion (stress)	During the last few weeks have you ... 1. been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly? 2. felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? 3. felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems? (delete) 4. felt that things were going your way? (delete) 5. found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	.989 .847 .881		
Intrinsic motivation ( $\alpha = 0.898$ )	I do participate in sports activities because I ... 1. can improve my skills (delete) 2. like challenges 3. like to have fun 4. do something that I am good at 5. need to go to higher level 6. need to meet new friends	.700 .713 .742 .785 .701	.850	.531
Goal-orientation ( $\alpha = 0.832$ )	1. I am the only one who can perform the specific skill or play like challenges (delete) 2. I learn a new skill and it makes me want to practice more 3. I can do better than my friends (delete) 4. I learn something that is fun to do 5. others mess up but I do not (delete) 6. I learn a new skill by trying hard 7. I work really hard 8. I am the best	.763 .751 .811 .751 .754	.877	.587
Self-efficacy ( $\alpha = 0.815$ )	1. I will be able to achieve most of the goals o set for myself 2. I will be able to overcome many challenges successfully 3. I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks 4. compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well (delete) 5. even when things are tough, I can perform quite well (delete)	.821 .722 .765	.814	.593
Self-talk ( $\alpha = 0.886$ )	When I compete ... 1. I talk to myself in order to be able to concentrate more fully on the competition (delete) 2. I talk to myself to give directions	.852 .754 .773 .762 .760	.887	.610

	3. I talk to myself to enhance my self-confidence (delete) 4. I talk to myself to motivate myself and increase my effort 5. I talk to myself to encourage myself and to relax 6. I talk to myself to strengthen a positive thought 7. I talk to myself to stop negative thinking (delete) 8. I talk to myself to correct my mistakes			
Spirituality ( $\alpha = 0.819$ )	1. I look for spirituality for guidance of character during a game (e.g.: helping me to not get upset at referees or other players) 2. I look to spirituality to keep me healthy during games (e.g.: Protecting me from injury or helping me recover from injury quicker) 3. I look to spirituality to help my team win games 4. I use spirituality as a way to help me with the emotional roller coaster of winning and losing (delete) 5. I use spirituality to help me deal with the external pressure from coaches, teammates, peers, or parents	.722 .813 .736 .753	.843	.573
Performance ( $\alpha = 0.938$ )	During the competition ... 1. I was able to overcome obstacles on the field or court 2. I was confidence to overcome obstacles on the 3. I worked as hard as possible on the field 4. I used my abilities to their maximal potential 5. I fully presented my tactical abilities during competition 6. I coordinated my movements well	.682 .856 .783 .712 .668	.860	.553

**Table 3: Discriminate validity**

Item				Inter-item correlation						
	AVE	MSV	ASV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Emotion	.865	.339	.132	1						
2. Spirituality	.573	.282	.128	.359	1					
3. Self-efficacy	.593	.339	.134	.582	.343	1				
4. Goal-orientation	.587	.157	.084	.179	.319	.268	1			
5. Self-talk	.610	.149	.084	.360	.204	.386	.254	1		
6. Intrinsic motivation	.531	.282	.141	.286	.531	.295	.396	.259	1	
7. Performance	.553	.172	.086	-.286	.311	.193	.281	.222	.415	1

### 4.3 Structural model

Before performing structural equation modeling test, the model fit indices showed that Chi-square = 3604.757, df = 1962,  $p < 0.05$ , CMIN = 1.837, CFI = 0.907, TLI = 0.912, RMSEA = 0.052. The results of the study have shown in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Results of the study

No	Hypothesis	Standardized Estimate	CR	P	Results
H1	Emotion -----> Performance	-0.391	-3.000	0.003	Supported
H2	Spirituality -----> Performance	0.129	2.499	0.012	Supported
H3	Self-efficacy -----> Performance	0.045	0.738	0.461	No-Supported
H4	Goal-orientation -----> Performance	0.283	3.858	***	Supported
H5	Self-talk -----> Performance	0.120	2.297	0.022	Supported
H6	Intrinsic motivation -----> Performance	0.080	1.582	0.103	No-supported

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

This study explores how influence of emotion, spirituality, self-efficacy, goal-orientation, self-talk and intrinsic motivation on sport players' performance. H1 tests the relationship between the independent variable of emotion and the dependent variable of perceived performance of team players. The results show that there is a negative influence between emotion and perceived performance of team players ( $\beta = -0.391$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, H1 was supported. H2 tests the relationship between the independent variable of spirituality and the dependent variable of perceived performance of team players. The results show that there is a positive influence between spirituality and perceived performance of team players ( $\beta = 0.129$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, H2 was supported. H3 tests the relationship between the independent variable of self-efficacy and the dependent variable of perceived performance of team players. The results show that self-efficacy does not have a significant influence on perceived performance of team players ( $\beta = 0.045$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, H3 is not supported. H4 tests the relationship between the independent variable of goal orientation and the dependent variable of perceived performance of team players. The results that there is a positive relationship between goal orientation and perceived performance of team players ( $\beta = 0.283$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, H4 is supported. H5 tests the relationship between the independent variable of self-talk and the dependent variable of perceived performance of team players. The results show that there is a positive influence between self-talk and perceived performance of team players ( $\beta = 0.120$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, H5 is supported. H6 tests the relationship between the independent variable of intrinsic motivation and the dependent variable of perceived performance of team players. The results show that intrinsic motivation does not have a significant influence on perceived performance of team players ( $\beta = 0.080$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, H6 is not supported.

Some theoretical contributions can be concluded from this study. Emotion refers to a state characterized by physiological arousal, subjective feelings, changes in facial expression, and adoptive behaviours (Coon, 1998; Coon & Mitterer, 2016). Generally, there are positive and negative emotions that affect the behavior of a person. Statistical findings depict that the  $p < 0.05$ , hence can be concluded that emotions have an impact on players performance. The beta value is  $-0.391$ , indicating there is a negative relationship between emotion and perceived performance of team players, which in line with Moen & Sandbakk (2016) found that there is a significant relationship between emotions and subjective performance. Spirituality is one of the psychological variables

considered under the present study. Relatively few studies have been conducted using spirituality ascertain the impact on players performance; the majority of the studies revealed spirituality developed a positive impact on players performance. A qualitative study conducted on Spirituality in sport (athletes' experiences and reflections) by Ronkainen et.al. (2013) concluded the study remarks by analyzing the reflective stories written by the participants on their spirituality experiences. The study participants included eight elite athletes and two coaches, and they have concluded that spirituality had let them for better performance (Ronkainen, et al., 2013). According to qualitative studies conducted by Sarkar and Parker (2014) revealed that Olympic medalists such as Michael Johnson, a four-time Olympic champion, emphasized the significance of religious and spiritual beliefs for many sport performers (Sarkar, et al., 2014; Johnson, 2011). Statistical finding of the current research depicts that the  $p < 0.05$ , hence it can be concluded that spirituality has an impact on performance. The beta value is 0.129, concluding that there is a low positive relationship between spirituality and players performance. The empirical result of this study contributes and substantiates the hypothesis regarding spirituality which is stated below. Chinese culture is embedded by the Buddhist philosophy, and Hindu and Islamic beliefs. Most of the population in China rely and believe on spiritual existence. Before any sports event, the players tend to get the blessings of the three religious preachers which show how players depend on spirituality.

Self-efficacy philosophies determine how people think, feel, motivate themselves and behave. Further these facts create varied effects through four main processes namely, cognitive, motivational, and affective and selection processes (Bandura, 1994). The results of the previous studies conducted in this regard relating to sports and non-sports context were taken into attention. A study finding of non-sport context relating to government organizations revealed that self-efficacy and mission performance found to have a positive correlation (Su, et al., 2016). A positive relationship between self-efficacy and work performance had been found by many scholars (Iroegbu, 2015; Miraglia et al., 2017). Statistical finding of the current research depicts that the  $p > 0.05$ , hence it can be concluded that self-efficacy does not have an impact on performance. Self-efficacy believes are not pertaining with certain players primarily because of continuous event losses in international context. Hence, despite of the high perceived performance, their actual belief of their capabilities beyond the national boundaries are less.

Goal-orientation research conducted in the sports context disclosed that male athletes' main concern was to perform better by comparing themselves with other athletes in terms of their abilities in the competitive sports environment (Chin, et al., 2012; Kleingeld & Mierlo, 2011). Statistical finding of the current research depicts that the  $p < 0.05$ , hence it can be concluded that the hypothesis was supported by empirical findings of the present research. The principal reason behind the persistence of relationships is that the players perception that they only can succeed with better performance. Their prime orientation is to be in the team and play under the national flag. Statistical finding of the current research depicts that the  $p < 0.05$ , hence can be concluded that self-talk has an impact on performance. The finding of the current research is consistent with

Georgakaki & Karakasidou (2017), Dagrou et al. (1992) and Van Raalte et al. (1995). Positive self-talk is the utmost important habit that the players should practice in order to reach maximum performance. Thus, the principal reason behind the relationship is the habitual self-talk they possess when they are engaged in a game.

In addition, motivation is assumed to be intrinsic when performance and the behavior are driven by joy or interest in the job itself, in order to feel challenged and to discover new things (Deci, 1975). A person feels satisfied, enjoyed, and considers the task to be fun, when he is intrinsically motivated (Csikszentmihalyi, 1978). Certain studies conducted in organizational context had concluded that intrinsic motivation along with intrinsic rewards contribute significantly to employees' job performance (Shahzadi, et al., 2014). Statistical finding of the current research depicts that the  $p > 0.05$ , hence it can be concluded that hypothesis was not supported. There are certain players who are coming from rural areas, and majority of them are suffering from poverty. Other than players from Badminton, basketball and Dragon Boat Racing most of the other players find it difficult to find a suitable job which can facilitate their living. Therefore, intrinsic motivations among certain players are low.

Certain practical implications also can be concluded from this study. It is found that there is a negative association between emotions and performance. Therefore, trainers need to pay more attention on mitigating negative emotions through training and programs. It was revealed that spirituality has an association with performance. Spirituality climate among the players should be encouraged by the coaches and administrative personal to develop spiritual aspects. Furthermore, it is found that there is an association between self-talk and performance. Sports development committees appointed by the government and the heads of sports associations should focus on implementing active self-talk sessions to encourage players to talk to them-selves. Goal-orientation of players found to have an association with performance according to the study results. It is a prerequisite for a player to have an aim for the successive performance. Therefore, more research is needed to ascertain most prominent goals of the players by the administrators including coaches to help them in achieving these. In addition, if the players do not have any belief of their capabilities, even if they have goal-orientation, their effort will become invaluable. These types of issues should be mitigated by the sports counselors by closely monitoring the attitudes of the national players due to there is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and performance.

Some limitations of this study need to be highlighted. The study conducted was a cross sectional study. Data had been collected soon after the completion from the players at the pavilion. Data had been gathered just once as mentioned above, due to constraints of cost, effort, time, and the approvals from the coaches. Second, the study considered the most valid, tested, and proven psychological variables. Some of the psychological variables were ignored due to time, cost, and energy constraints. In addition, this study mainly concerned about psychological factors affecting team performance. Individual players' attention on this said regard is not considered. Last, the sample of the study was derived from the population which consisted of team players who were in team sports. The involvement of players of Badminton (male), Dragon Boat Racing 7's, and handball

were unable to consider due to unavailability and non-existence of teams at the time of data collection.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declared that they have no conflicts of interest to this work. We declare that we do not have any commercial or associative interest that represents a conflict of interest in connection with the work submitted.

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